

SCHOOL FACILITIES INITIATIVE TASK FORCE SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 29, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX, COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Beaulieu, Bryer, DeMatto, Denno, Greenleaf, Heller, Koehler, O'Donnell, Peruzzotti, Roode, Semancik, Streeter, Trejo, Volkmann, Watson, Zoda  
Ex-officio: Somers, Hoyt  
Staff: Oefinger, Schneider, Murphy, Bresnahan  
Consultant: Mike Zuba and Rebecca Augur

a. Introduction of Members

Members of the Task Force introduced themselves.

b. Introduction of Facilitator from Milone and MacBroom

Mayor Somers introduced Mike Zuba and Rebecca Augur from Milone and MacBroom (M&M), facilitators for the School Facilities Initiative Task Force effort.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Town Manager Oefinger distributed a communication from Task Force member Kevin Fital who was unable to attend the meeting.

III. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Establishment/Purpose of Task Force

Mayor Somers noted the Town Council resolution establishing the Task Force.

b. Facilitator Overview of Effort

Mr. Zuba distributed a “kick-off” presentation including a suggested meeting day and schedule. After some discussion, the group decided to meet the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Zuba reviewed the project schedule. The first two meetings will be used to review existing conditions and facilities as well as the demographics that were the driving force behind Groton Public Schools’ redistricting plan. The next three meetings will cover alternatives, grade configurations, and facilities, with more members of the project team becoming involved. The effort will also involve public benchmarking and development of cost estimates. Mr. Zuba reviewed the core strengths of the project team.

The discovery phase leads to the option phase. During this phase there is a sharing of thoughts and ideas as the group works toward more refined recommendations. Mr. Zuba stated that recommendations will be developed by the end of August or early September in time for a referendum. He noted the significant analysis done as part of the redistricting effort. Town Manager Oefinger corrected Mr. Zuba noting that in order to hold a November 2013 bond referendum, the bond referendum package would have to be finalized by April or May.

Trejo asked who would be providing the educational specifications. Mr. Zuba responded that the specifications will come from the M&M educational consultant working with the Board of Education and will flow through the Superintendent.

Denno asked the consultants to provide more information on their background and experience. Mr. Zuba explained that as city planners, their approach to this process is to bring a cross-section of the community together. M&M has been involved in Groton's redistricting effort. He also cited Region 15 Public Schools, New Milford Public Schools, and Bristol Public Schools as examples of M&M's work. Ms. Augur noted that facilitating discussions is another M&M skill set.

Heller suggested that the last referendum failed because of inadequate public outreach and communication and he questioned M&M's expertise in garnering public support. Mr. Zuba explained that M&M supports a clear and transparent process and the pulse of the community is monitored throughout. M&M relies on statistically valid research and looks for a cross section early on in the benchmarking process. For communication, M&M utilizes numerous outlets including the website, press, and public meetings. The recommendation will be packaged so that the community is vested. Somers suggested that a subcommittee of the Task Force could do public information sessions in the community.

Mr. Zuba noted discussions about doing a "post mortem" on the Phase II effort to identify why the referendum failed and what was good about the proposal.

Peruzzotti cautioned that everyone on the Task Force may not agree completely, but everyone should be on board when a final plan is identified and they must have the ability to go out into the community and support the Task Force's recommendation.

c. Election of Chair

A motion was made by Peruzzotti, seconded by Streeter, to elect Jonathan Heller Chairman of the School Facilities Initiative Task Force.

The motion carried unanimously.

d. Establishment of Regular Meeting Schedule

(See discussion under section a. above.)

e. Next Meeting Date

(See discussion under section a. above.)

f. Visioning Session

The consultants led the Task Force in an exercise to identify members' different perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of Groton's schools.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.